

Dear Jan,

9/4/74

What I do when I do it and things of this sort are often determined not by preference but by externals. Because I was too tired for other things after too early a start I decided to read the Wecht-Smith opus for which I'm indebted to you.

Sometimes when I desire to make notes I do it in the form of a communication to others I feel I should undertake to inform. In such cases - and this is one - I expect strongly-held and strongly expressed opinions to be private.

I am aware of the hazard in these procedures and that one is I can come across in a way others with more definitive knowledge of fact would take other than those with dedication and less knowledge may.

I am without disposition toward diplomacy with this pair because of my prior experiences with both and because of other specifics of which you are not aware and at this juncture I do not take time to inform you. With regard to both I have existing prejudices. Smith has psychological problems and allowances are his due because of them. If his science does not seem to qualify him for the nest in which Wecht has settled him, Smith is by training a scientist. Not medical.

Neither is an analyst.

Neither is in this work honest and neither had the intention of honesty. One simple measure for you in the total absence of earlier work that despite Cyril's access to this supposedly precious and unique evidence is almost without exception only duplicated in this article that with only few exceptions is not new. By this I mean with the exception of their persisting factual errors. There is no way the audience that has no independent knowledge would know, for example, that books were written or that there was a Lattimer. In fact, of the material that I can credit in this there is but a single substantial new fact. I do credit it but reject on other evidence the conclusions drawn from it. In any event, it is inherent in my work of nine years ago and this is not new. The proof is what is new.

If I were to specify the two most conspicuous characteristics of this piece I was, in order, stipulate carelessness and factual error. If I were to specify the causes I would, in order, specify ego and ignorance.

Ignorance may be hard to accept given Wecht's impeccable scientific credentials and the amount of time Smith has spent in the Archives alone. I mean ignorance and I mean it with such emphasis I can add you'd be unwilling to believe it. Plain, ordinary ignorance of fact that was beyond question before either ever made a noise in this field.

This is really so bad a piece of work that there is no agency mentioned in it that cannot use it as a defense of that agency. If it does not have to be done in public, or not in the presence of an adversary. All of it can be demolished with that kind of ease.

Humor is not present. Little qualifications are buried through, like escape hatches. I read this as in part proper caution and in part self-recognized uncertainties.

I'm not taking time for details and to avoid them I left the copy out of reach. That it nor my intent and it would take too long to no purpose. My copy is marked up in two colors, if you are ever here and find this worth the time. You need not believe me and you may wonder about my character or emotions or other factors you may envision. But I'm telling it to you as it really is. Wrap describes, careless and repetitious at best, awful not infrequently enough.

Can you begin to imagine the amount of work required to be able to see this? If you can then you can begin to have an understanding of the time required to explain these pretty strong statements. But this stuff is really so bad that if there is every a malpractice suit involving much bread, enough for someone to make the investment, Cyril's reputation can be ruined on this alone.

So, when people like you, meaningful and holding principle, get something like this, you become its creatures because you can't possibly have a basis for questioning. However, if the intellectual exercise and the practice at analyzing is worth the time for you, I'll bet you can give yourself some questions if you give the piece a really critical rereading.